

22 January 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Plans Staff

SUBJECT : One-Grade Versus Two-Grade Promotions

REFERENCE : Plans Staff Studies, currently on record, same subj

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1. The supposed merit of adopting a single grade promotion policy for the Agency was disclosed during a meeting of the CIA Career Council in April 1959. The main proponents of this policy were the Clandestine Service (as represented [redacted] and the Office of Central Reference of the Intelligence Directorate. Headroom problems had developed at the lower professional grade levels, and it was [redacted] that one-grade promotions would give those employees concerned a greater feeling of movement, i.e., a feeling of promotional progress. The premise was that an employee's morale would be served better through his receiving two smaller promotions rather than a single large one in the same time frame. Objections raised to this idea were essentially administrative in nature. Such a system was, however, at odds with provisions of the federal job classification act which the Agency had adopted previously, i.e., professional employees in Grades 6, 8 and 10 would, for an unspecified period, be earning more or less than the pay rate established for the job. It should be mentioned that at the time of this particular Career Council meeting the members envisioned a CIA pay system quite apart from the GS system in forthcoming years. They might reasonably have concluded that the one-grade promotion at most was an interim measure.

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2. It is interesting to note that prior to and subsequent to the introduction of the one-grade promotion, two rather important personnel management concepts were brought before the Career Council. Our Director, Mr. Helms, was on the scene [redacted] At the 43rd meeting of the Council held in 1957, [redacted] quoted Admiral Connolly, a member of the Clark Committee, as saying "that the Agency should be very careful not to apply competitive promotion (policy) to intermediate and junior grades because we would run the risk of losing good men whose abilities cannot adequately be made known to a central board or committee." Further, at a meeting in 1962 the Council reaffirmed the policy and desirability of providing for a Career Trainee's promotion from GS-07 to GS-11 in three and one-half years. It seems quite clear that neither the Council nor [redacted] understood that the one-grade promotion policy would interfere in any way with the programmed development of promising junior professional officers, i.e., the policy was not expected to involve a significant increase in the time-in-grade an employee experiences in moving from GS-07

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to GS-11 nor were promotions at these levels expected to be particularly competitive. This principle is limited, of course, to those junior officers viewed as "professionals" whose career development generally has been of special concern to all career services.

3. Although experience since the innovation of the one-grade promotion has not provided convincing evidence that the net effect has been good or bad for the Agency, some employees and managers continue to challenge the wisdom of pursuing this policy. It is worth repeating that the purpose for establishing the one-grade promotion policy was to cultivate the feeling in the employee's mind of promotion progress. In the final analysis, I believe this policy has not really accomplished this objective, nor has it necessarily served the best interests of management. Recently compiled statistics strongly indicate that the rate of movement from the GS-07 level to the GS-11 level has been slower for all concerned under the one-step promotion policy. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the professional employee has had a poorer deal since this policy was introduced. Whether this policy of itself has had any marked effect on the attrition rate at these levels is not established, but it most certainly has influenced decisions to resign from the Agency. Professional employees most probably view Grades 6, 8 and 10 as additional rungs on the promotion ladder. These grades are neither treated nor perceived as demonstrating meaningful promotional movement. Further, it is probable that the one-grade promotion policy has fostered the promotion of some employees (professional and non-professional) neither qualified nor competitive for advancement under a regular two-grade system. At junior grade levels promotion (especially a one-grade promotion) represents a comparatively lesser risk or degree of reward as one might view it. *who pay-no evidence*

4. Reverting to a two-step promotion policy most likely would not serve the remedial purpose of changing things for the better with respect to the career development of the young professional. The present policy is now well established and reasonably well accepted. Professional input has been drastically reduced during the past year and is channeled largely through the CT Program, whose hiring grade level has increased in recent years, and this lessens the pressure to effect a policy change. The practical reasons for not changing our present policy are many:

a. Career services have used the cumulative grade authorization approach for establishing promotion headroom and many are seriously overdrawn at the junior grade levels, e.g., except via the special avenue of the Professional Trainee Program in the Clandestine Service it is common knowledge that it is veritably easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than to get promoted from GS-07 to GS-08! This very month, January 1971, the CS Panel responsible for GS-09 personnel promoted only 14 of 39 so called "professional" level employees recommended for the GS-10 level (18 of 51 nominees were promoted). The estimated average time-in-grade for this "professional" group is two and one-half years, illustrating the scope of the headroom problem.

b. Distinctions between certain professional and non-professional occupational categories are small and viewed by some as trivial. Many employees, especially women, heretofore placable in non-professional positions, would press to be accredited as "professional". Employees would be scurrying to improve their image (status) and component T/O's would need extensive revamping.

c. The review of performance records of personnel in Grades 6, 8 and 10 to identify those worthy of immediate promotion consideration and those who represent a problem in this regard would be a most delicate process with many untoward ramifications.

5. Unbeknown to many the use of a two-step promotion as a special incentive for the young professional has been available to management to the extent that the Director of Personnel is authorized to grant exceptions to the one-grade promotion. Few career services press for such consideration. Without exception as far as is known, those few requests made concern the promotion of the employee at the GS-04 or GS-05 level who, through going to night school and through the acquisition of appropriate Agency experience, qualifies in due course for a "professional" position at the GS-07 level. Management has tended to frown on the granting of two-step promotions because of fear that in an insidious way this practice would ultimately threaten or overtake the one-step policy and pose a tough adjudicatory problem in most cases. With the Quality Step Increase representing that special reward for recognizing an employee's meritorious performance, additional incentives have been deemed unnecessary.

6. The identification and development of occupational career matrices, the sharpening of distinctions between major job levels, i.e., professional and non-professional, and the review and possible modification of present career service structures should precede, in my estimation, any major change of pay policy.

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